

BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.

WHEN war is raging throughout the greater part of North America, desolating some of its finest provinces, convulsing the governmental institutions, and arresting the progress of the entire region extending southward from the Lakes to the Isthmus, the fortunes of the British provinces look brighter by the contrast, but, at the same time, they demand our careful regard, owing to the new influences which, for good or for evil, will speedily be brought to bear upon them. The deplorable dissensions in the United States, and the great burden of debt which that hitherto lightly-taxed country is incurring, not only tends to turn the tide of emigration towards the north instead of to the south of the St Lawrence, but not a few even of the people of the States will probably prefer to seek new homes in Canada, rather than submit themselves to the heavy taxation and other inconveniences which are so rapidly accumulating in the territories of the now disrupted and disunited American republic. It may seem, too, that the disruption of the United States into two separate and rival confederacies relieves our American provinces of their greatest peril—the peril consequent upon having a vast and ambitious Power for their immediate neighbour. But there is another side of the question which ought not to be overlooked. The serious complications and further secessions from the Union which will probably ensue, upon the establishment of the South as an independent Power, must bring new influences to bear upon British America, which will be either mischievous or the reverse, according as their coming is timeously prepared for or foolishly disregarded.

There is, moreover, a new and highly interesting event which makes more than usually seasonable a survey of the position of

our colonies in the New World. British America has just completed herself by the establishment of a fully-organised colony at her western extremity, on the shores of the Pacific Ocean. Our dominion, which was but nominal and *de jure* over the vast territory that lies to the west of the great lakes, has suddenly, and by a bound, reached its utmost limit, and become a substantial fact on the further side of the continent. And on that extreme frontier of our power, we, singularly enough, find a province which, in its geographical position, commercial opportunities, and mineral wealth, reminds us of the parent Isles, and bids fair in future times to occupy the same distinguished position in the new world of the Pacific which England does in the older world on the shores of the Atlantic.

The recent establishment of British and Anglo-American States on the shores of the Pacific, is an event which commences a new epoch in the world's history. For four thousand years has the White race of Europe, the aristocracy of the globe, been journeying westward to the land of the setting sun, and ever, like the sunset, has the goal of their wanderings receded as they advanced. Over the Ural Mountains, and winding round the Black Sea, they passed into Europe before the light of history could reveal their march. The sunny shores of the Mediterranean tempted them onward to the Pillars of Hercules; the icy Baltic repelled them to seek a kindlier region westward on the banks of the Rhine and the valleys of France. And now, after nearly forty centuries of growth and vicissitude in Europe, overleaping the ocean channel of the Atlantic, they have peopled a new world, and are settling on the shores of another great ocean beyond. Year by year, though the present dreadful turmoil in the

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States temporarily disturbs the advance, the line of civilised settlers advances westward over the prairies. From our sparse settlement of the Red River draw a straight line south to the Gulf of Mexico, and it will mark where the tide of population is now creeping up like a flowing sea upon the solitudes of the Far West, where linger the vanishing remnants of the Red race, who once spread as lords and occupants over the whole continent. Like the last of the great mammoth bulls, which the Indian legends represent as defying the thunders of Manitou to the last, standing at bay on a summit of the Rocky Mountains, tossing the flaming thunderbolts from his massive front, and yet forced at length, discomfited but not subdued, to plunge and disappear in the waters of the Western Ocean,—not less unyielding is the nature, not less certain the ultimate fate, of the red tribes of the ever-narrowing prairies. Civilisation, at the rate of nine miles a-year, is marching against them from the east, wresting from them their hunting-fields, forcing them back towards the sandy desert and the rocky Cordillera; while beyond the mountains the ground is being occupied, and their retreat cut off, by the fringe of fast-growing settlements of the pale-faces along the shores of the Pacific.

It is long since Balboa, "from a peak in Darien," first beheld the rolling expanse of the Pacific—three centuries and a half have passed since the Spaniards began to settle on the western coast of America, beyond the Andes and the Rocky Mountains; but it is but as yesterday that the shores of the Pacific have been reached in their westward march by the Anglo-Saxons. Hardly a dozen years have elapsed since the rush of gold-seekers first began to redeem from utter solitude the coast of California, and to erect a civilised state on the western slopes of the Cordillera. Not long before then, the British race had reached the out-

skirts of the Pacific Ocean from the other side of the world. Australia and New Zealand are the great outposts of our power, the solid bulwarks of our advance in the Southern Pacific; while, further north, from Hong-Kong, from the coal island of Labuan, and from the new settlements in Borneo, we now begin to invade the very haunts of primeval nature in the Indian Archipelago. British Columbia, in the temperate regions of the North Pacific, now completes our league of that virgin ocean. From the east and from the west alike, we have reached and settled upon the opposite shores of the Pacific; and before the present century be ended, we shall see those two different streams of Anglo-Saxon migration meeting, and forming new and important relationships on the shores and islands of that ocean which, last discovered, seems destined to witness the crowning achievements of the adventurous British race.

Only five years have elapsed since the discovery of gold mines on the Fraser River (in 1858) first began to raise Victoria, now the capital of Vancouver Island, from an unimportant station of the Hudson Bay Company, into a flourishing commercial town. Then it was that the British territory beyond the Rocky Mountains was taken from the jurisdiction of the Hudson Bay Company, and formed into a colony, by the statesmanlike foresight and able superintendence of Sir E. B. Lytton, then Colonial Minister. That was a wise step in every respect. The discovery of the gold deposits was attracting a medley throng of not very scrupulous immigrants, whose influx rendered necessary an efficient executive, in order to prevent the colony from falling into anarchy. A moderately strong government was called for to prevent any mischievous attempts at "annexation" on the part of the American immigrants from Oregon and California. It was needed also to assist and direct the nascent energies of the

colony in the course best suited to secure for it the prosperous future to which its advantages of position and resources entitle it to aspire.

The aspect of Vancouver Island, as the emigrant approaches it from the sea, is not very inviting in a utilitarian point of view. The island, which is 270 miles long, by 40 to 70 in breadth, consists of a mass of rounded, and in some parts rocky hills, densely covered with sombre forests of pine. The native Indians say that there are level tracts in the interior, and also a line of water communication (some-what resembling the Caledonian Canal) right through the island; but so far as has yet been ascertained by actual survey, it is at the southern end of the island, around Victoria, that the chief portion of comparatively level land is to be found. There the soil is unquestionably good, and well repays the cultivator. But it is its harbours, its favourable position for maritime commerce, and its mineral wealth, which constitute the peculiar value of the island. Coal-mines of considerable extent and fair quality have already begun to be worked at Nanaimo, not far from Victoria; and it is believed that this invaluable mineral is to be found in various other parts of the island. Rich mines of copper have also been found; and the presence of iron has also been noticed, although it is impossible as yet to say to what extent this metal exists in a state that will repay the cost of extraction. Another native production, which will for a long time to come be valuable to the colony, is the timber, which supplies abundant store of fuel, and furnishes the finest material for masts and for building purposes. There is a good deal of oak also, but for the most part of a stunted kind. The natural harbour of Victoria is not first-rate, and cannot at present admit ships which draw more than seventeen feet of water; but three miles off, at Esquimalt, there is the finest natural harbour on the whole

American coast of the Pacific, from Behring's Straits to Cape Horn. At present, and without the slightest artificial improvement, ships of the heaviest tonnage can unload close to the rocks. "Esquimalt," says Captain Barrett-Lennard, himself a sailor, "possesses a splendid harbour—consisting, properly speaking, of two harbours, each of which is capable of receiving vessels of the largest tonnage, even to the Great Eastern herself. A whole fleet might here find secure anchorage." It is now the station of the Pacific squadron; and, as Dr Rat-tray, R.N., suggests, it might be made, with great advantage to the service, the sanatorium of our squadron in the China seas. Indeed, there is much to be said in favour of making Esquimalt the headquarters of both sections of the fleet which we maintain in the Pacific; and probably it will become so as soon as a direct overland communication is established between Canada and British Columbia. It is also the best station for whalers in the North Pacific, being much nearer their scene of operations than San Francisco, whither they at present resort. Rich fisheries of cod, herring, &c., exist along the coasts and in the seas adjoining the island, which ere long will furnish valuable produce for export.

Sailing through the Strait of Fuca, and winding in a semicircle round the southern end of Vancouver Island for two hundred miles, we find ourselves in the Gulf of Georgia (as the arm of the sea is called which lies between the island and the mainland of British Columbia), opposite the mouth of the Fraser River; and proceeding fifteen miles up the river, we arrive at New Westminster, the capital of British Columbia, occupying a commanding and well-chosen position on the north bank. Steaming seventy-two miles further up the river, we come to the town of Hope, and fifteen miles beyond that to Yale, which is the terminus of the steamboat navigation; for im-

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mediately above that town the river has to force a passage through the low mountain range which skirts the coast, and between which and the Rocky Mountains lies the basin of the Fraser River and its tributaries. This basin is called the "Upper Fraser" (the "Lower Fraser" being the shorter portion of the river which reaches from Yale downwards), constituting the northern portion of the province, and containing the great pastoral and agricultural portion of British Columbia. Another district which affords scope for agriculture and pasturage lies in the south-eastern part of the province, around the upper waters of the Columbia or Oregon River—the subsequent course of which stream is through American territory.

The great attraction of British Columbia at present, we need hardly say, is its gold and silver mines—the former of which are probably the most valuable in the world. The famous "Cariboo Diggings" are four hundred miles up the Fraser River; and as there are few roads, even of the rudest kind, yet made, and the track lies through a densely wooded country and over the rocky heights of the coast range, they are all but inaccessible to the majority of emigrants. A perfect rush of immigrants took place from California in 1848, when gold was first discovered in the Fraser River; San Francisco, we are told, appeared almost deserted; but the greater part of those immigrants rushed back again almost as fast as they came. It was not that gold was scarce—on the contrary, every year richer diggings are being found; but there was no means of transit, and provisions, even though selling at exorbitant prices, were hardly procurable. These obstructions to the working of the gold-fields continue in formidable force at the present time. The price of labour is so high, and the force at the disposal of the executive is so small, that road-making can only proceed at a

slow pace. Provisions too, although no longer at an exorbitant price at Victoria, are still exceedingly scarce and excessively dear in all the region of the "Upper Fraser," so that the small capital of the emigrant is often exhausted before he can fairly begin work at the diggings. Those difficulties it is, and not the climate or any deficiency of the mines, which have driven away so many intending settlers, and given rise to so many bitter complaints.

The question of climate and soil, in regard to Vancouver Island and British Columbia, is one of the first importance; and it is also one upon which a remarkable diversity of opinion has been recently expressed. Within the last few months no less than three books have been published on British Columbia—one by Mr Macdonald, late of the Government Survey Staff of that colony; another by Dr Rattray, R.N., who dates his preface from Esquimalt, the station of our Pacific Squadron; and the third by Captain Barrett-Lennard, who made a yacht voyage round Vancouver Island, and thereafter journeyed to Cariboo. The first of these gentlemen, who must have ample personal experience, but who gives no statistics, pours out an anathema against the whole region, and warns every intending settler to betake himself elsewhere. Dr Rattray, on the other hand, speaks highly of the climate of both colonies, and, while pointing out the small extent of arable land in Vancouver Island, speaks confidently of the pastoral and agricultural resources of British Columbia. Captain Barrett-Lennard expresses similar opinions. "In the interior of British Columbia," he says, "are vast tracts of great fertility, capable of conversion into the finest agricultural and pastoral lands. . . . There are extensive open districts of the finest grazing land imaginable, capable of supporting innumerable herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. . . . The climate is remarkably healthy and bracing, and the air pure. As we advance into the interior, we find

the cold, during winter, increase in intensity ; at the same time the climate is less moist, and less subject to sudden and frequent changes than on the coast. This being the case, it will naturally be inferred that, with a corresponding excellence of soil, any of the ordinary household vegetables grown in England may be raised here. That this is the actual fact I can testify from personal experience." These remarks apply to British Columbia, the climate of which is inferior to that of Vancouver Island ; but speaking of the climate of both colonies, he says, " The extremes of heat and cold are seldom felt to be at all inconvenient ; and there are, I apprehend, few parts of the world in which the Englishman will find a climate more resembling his own." Dr Rattray, who gives tables of elaborate statistics, says that the climate is fully equal to that of the south of England, and that the health of our crews on the station is even better than at home. The mean annual temperature of Victoria is a shade higher than that of New York, ten degrees higher than that of Quebec, and seven degrees higher than that of Toronto. The climate of Vancouver Island, moreover, is remarkably agreeable, and is totally exempt from the extremes of heat and cold which characterise that of Canada. As Dr Rattray's opinion carries weight from his professional position in the colony, and is substantiated by irrefragable statistics, as well as by the independent testimony of Captain Barrett-Lennard, we cannot but accept it as the true statement of the case, and must dismiss Mr Macdonald's as thoroughly unreliable.

The size of Vancouver Island is only one-fourth that of England and Wales, but the adjoining territory of British Columbia is nearly twice as large as the United Kingdom : so that those sister colonies (which it would be well to unite into one) are together fully twice the size of the British Isles. In climate, as

we have seen, they closely resemble the British Isles ; like the mother country, also, they are unusually rich in minerals ; and in almost every respect they occupy the same position on the western side of the New World, as England does on the western side of the Old. The chief obstacle which obstructs the rapid growth of these new colonies is their great distance from England and the other countries from which settlers may be expected to come. It is farther from England to British Columbia by Cape Horn, than it is from England to Hong-Kong by the Cape of Good Hope. It is this farthest route which regulates the accessibility of the colony, for the only shorter one at present in use (across the Isthmus of Panama) is considerably more expensive. What is wanted—what is indispensable to the growth of our colonies on the Pacific, and their continuance in allegiance to the British Government—is an overland route from the Canadas. When speaking on this subject a year ago, Sir E. B. Lytton stated that, had he continued in office, it was his intention to have formed new settlements in the region between Lake Superior and the Rocky Mountains, where as yet the Red River Settlement stands alone. These settlements would have been the piers, as it were, of a line of communication bridging over the vast solitudes which now separate Western Canada from British Columbia, and binding together all our North American provinces, from the mouth of the St Lawrence to the shores of the Pacific. How advantageous such a line of communication, however imperfectly constructed, would be to British Columbia, will be evident from the fact, that a Mr Lawrin, an old Californian miner, speaking from personal experience, in 1858, stated that he could travel all the way from St Paul, on the Mississippi, by the Red River and Saskatchewan, across the Rocky Mountains, by the Leather Pass, to the Cariboo diggings, for less money than an emi-

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grant would have to spend in reaching the same place from the mouth of the Fraser River!

That an overland line of communication will be established, and speedily, between Canada and British Columbia, there can be no doubt: the only question is, What degree of efficiency and substantiality is this line of communication to assume? Is the great project of an interoceanic railway, uniting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans by a route through British America, to be accomplished? or, from Lake Superior westwards, is there only to be an established track, with stations at intervals (caravanserais, in short), where travelling parties may rest and replenish their stores? A glance at the map will show that, great as is the breadth of America at this point, the geographical facilities for establishing an interoceanic communication are at least as great. From Halifax on the Atlantic, to Victoria on the Pacific, the distance is 2500 miles. Over one-half of this distance, from the Atlantic to the head of Lake Superior, the chain of the Lakes and the St Lawrence affords a line of water-communication not only unparallelled, but unapproached in vastness and excellence by any in the world. For the last dozen years, sea-going vessels have been able to sail from any point on Lakes Huron and Michigan downwards to the Atlantic; and not seldom within that period have vessels sailed from Chicago direct to Liverpool, without ever breaking bulk. Now that the obstacle presented by the rapids of the Sault St Marie, at the eastern outlet of Lake Superior, have been obviated by a canal, large sea-going vessels may sail from the very heart of the American continent to any part of the world. Steamers already ply on Lake Superior—an inland sea, four hundred miles in length by a hundred and fifty in breadth; and every year the line of the lakes and St Lawrence is becoming of more importance to the American States

which already stretch beyond the further extremity of Lake Superior. The Grand Trunk Railway, which already extends to the western limits of Canada, and affords a rapid communication between Portland and the eastern shores of Lake Huron, affords another magnificent highway from the Atlantic towards the heart of the continent; although its further progress westwards is likely to be slow. This great railway, or rather a continuation of it, at its eastern extremity, passes through American territory,—its Atlantic terminus being Portland, in the State of Maine. As the navigation of the Gulf of St Lawrence is impracticable during the winter months, the line of steamers subsidised (to the amount of £104,000 a-year) by the Canadian Government to ply between Galway and Quebec, has to sail to this American port during winter. This is an unsatisfactory arrangement, and we are glad to hear that it is about to be superseded by a better one. A new line of railway (called the Intercolonial Railway) is about to be constructed from Canada to the Atlantic, which shall run entirely through British territory, and shall have its terminus at Halifax; and as soon as it shall be completed, the Canadian line of steamers will run to Halifax all the year round, instead of alternately to Portland and Quebec. With the view of aiding the British Provinces in the formation of this new line of communication with the mother country, it is reported that the British Government has resolved to relieve the Canadian Government to the extent of four-fifths (£84,000) of the postal subsidy which it pays to the line of steamers; and also promise that, as soon as the Intercolonial Railway is completed, they will pay the entire subsidy. Canada is well satisfied with this arrangement; for as soon as the new scheme comes into effect, she will secure an annual saving of £84,000, which will not only pay her proportion of the interest on the cost of

the railway during construction, but leave a balance in her favour of £34,000 a-year; and when the railway is completed, that balance will become £54,000. In dealing thus generously, however, her Majesty's Ministers are killing two birds with one stone; because, under the new arrangement, the Galway line of steamers (from which the Government so scurvily withdrew the subsidy in the spring of 1861) is to replace the present Canadian line, and be restored to its old position.* Whenever this new arrangement is perfected by the completion of the Intercolonial Railway, we shall have a direct communication with Canada, through our own territories, all the year round; whereas at present, in the event of a war with the Americans, it is hardly possible for us to forward troops into Canada during the winter months. But the new railway cannot be constructed in a day, and we fear that if war is coming, it will be upon us long before we can avail ourselves of this new line of communication.

The frontier of the advancing line of British settlements in Western Canada is not yet half-way round Lake Huron, and is consequently still separated by a long distance from Lake Superior. The American States go far beyond the western end of that great lake, even to the head-waters of the Red River, which interlace with those of the Mississippi in the State of Minnesota. All the British side of Lake Superior is wilderness, and

even on the southern, or American, shore, it is only at a comparatively few points that human settlements interrupt the solitude of the primeval woods. The surpassingly rich veins of copper which abound on the American side of the lake have attracted various mining companies to this region; but as yet the scene gives little sign of the throng of civilised life which will ere long people the shores of that great inland sea. The Americans, however, with that "go-ahead" spirit which distinguishes them, foresee well what is coming; and at the western end of the lake two cities are already planned, which compete with one another for the honour of becoming the future capital of the region. We say "planned," for that is really all that has yet been accomplished: but planned they are most carefully, and streets and quays are marked out to occupy ground that is at present covered by the shallow waters of the bay. This encroachment on the watery domain is a favourite procedure of the Americans; the streets of San Francisco, for example, have been carried far out into the bay, and houses and shops now stand where ships used to lie when unloading.

Up to the head, or western extremity, of Lake Superior, as we have shown—and, indeed, as every one knows—an admirable line of communication exists with the Atlantic. And, great as is the importance of railways, we do not think that it would serve any important

* It is deeply to be regretted that the Galway line should have become a party question through the factious policy of the Whigs, who grudged that Ireland should owe so great a boon to a Conservative Government. We regard the establishment of a great port on the western coast of Ireland, with a line of magnificent steamers (such as the Company is ready to place upon the line) from thence to America, as not merely an act of common justice to Ireland, but as by far the most promising means of regenerating that backward country. To set agoing a stream of traffic to and from England through the heart of Ireland, is the only effectual means of breaking up that torpor, indolence, and savagery which still cling to the population of the western and south-western districts of the island: the natural fruits of which unhappy condition of affairs may be seen in the frightful agrarian outrages which have once more become so frequent, as well as in those extraordinary faction-feuds of which Archbishop Leahy has recently given us one instance, with the actual statistics of the bloody crimes which it has produced.

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purpose to extend the Grand Trunk Line much further. Between the western terminus of the railway and the further end of Lake Superior the water-communication is so ample and good that the Canadians may dispense with a railway for a good while to come. It is beyond Lake Superior that the difficulty arises, and that the Canadian Government will have to put forth all its spare energies and resources. The very first step beyond Lake Superior brings us face to face with a difficulty, which gives rise to a most awkward and embarrassing position of affairs. Looking at the map, we see that a river flowing straight from the west falls into the lake at its upper end ; and it appears as if one could easily ascend that river to three small lakes which are connected by its course, and thus proceed by a direct route through British territory to the Red River Settlement adjoining Lake Winnipeg. But such, it would seem, is not the case. The country between Lake Superior and Lake Winnipeg is said to present many difficulties ; no road of any kind leads westward from our side of Lake Superior ; and the Red River Settlement is, so far as regards a route through British territory, entirely isolated from the Canadas and our provinces on the Atlantic. In order to proceed from Canada to the Red River Settlement, we must make a detour southward into the American States, to St Paul, on the head-waters of the Mississippi, and then northwards down the Red River, which flows into Lake Winnipeg. Although this route by St Paul is unquestionably the easiest, seeing that the country between our frontier and St Paul is very level, and that steamboats carry goods and passengers down the Red River—still there could be little difficulty in making a good road straight from Lake Superior to the Red River Settlement : and such a road is greatly needed, to unite that settlement with Western Canada, instead of

leaving it wholly isolated, and dependent almost for its very existence upon its communication with the American territory.

On the expiry of the Hudson Bay Company's Charter in 1859, when the discovery of gold on the Fraser River led to the establishment of Vancouver Island and British Columbia as colonies of the Crown, a controversy arose as to whether Red River Settlement and the territories of the Saskatchewan, which extend for a thousand miles between Lake Superior and the new colonies beyond the Rocky Mountains, should not also be taken from the jurisdiction of the Hudson Bay Company, and erected into a new colony. We do not think the time has come for the adoption of such a measure : but, leaving the vast and almost unoccupied territory under the government of the Company, measures should be taken, in conjunction with our American Provinces, to construct a good waggon-road and a line of telegraph connecting Canada with British Columbia. On the 4th of July last, the Duke of Newcastle said that "he thought the Company should give facilities for a full postal and telegraphic communication between Halifax on the one side and New Westminster on the other ;" and he added that "he thought it would be possible, for an expenditure of £100,000, to form a communication [to the new colonies] through Canada, and he believed that the journey might be brought within thirty days." Whether or not the Home Government is sleeping over the matter, we cannot say ; but it is reported that the Governments of Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia, have agreed to act together in this important matter. Obviously they are the parties most interested in obtaining a communication with the colonies on the Pacific ; but the question, as one of Imperial policy, cannot be ignored by the Home Government. There are various sums, for postal services,

for bringing home troops and invalids from the Pacific station, &c., which the Government, we doubt not, would willingly transfer in aid of this new and much shorter route.

The soil and climate of the region lying between Lake Superior and British Columbia are, of course, matters of great importance in determining the policy to be pursued in regard to them. Captain Blakiston's report, which is characterised as admirable, even by those who are disposed to underrate the value of this region, speaks thus of the soil and productions of Red River Settlement:—

"The country is very level, and on the west generally open. There is a considerable amount of swamp; but in the dry parts the soil is well adapted for the growth of cereal and other crops, and naturally supports a rich growth of the different grasses. The trees are generally small, but there is fine oak and elm along the borders of the river, and there is timber suitable for building purposes to the north-east of the settlement. . . . Farming operations comprehend the growth of wheat, barley, oats, Indian corn, and potatoes,—the manufacture of cheese and butter,—and the keeping of cows, horses, pigs, and sheep; besides gardening operations for the culture of turnips, onions, pease, cabbage, rhubarb, radishes, mangold, carrots, hops, pumpkins, and melons—which all appear to thrive in ordinary seasons. . . . In respect to the growth of wheat, the soil seems particularly well adapted, but owing to the climate it is occasionally caught by the early frosts. Large returns are obtained from new land, sometimes up to forty bushels per acre, and the soil will bear cropping for many years in succession. Barley and oats do well, and are never damaged by the frost; but Indian corn is sometimes destroyed. The green crops flourish,—potatoes, turnips, and onions attaining very large size. Melons are said to come to maturity in the open air. . . . In regard to stock-farming, the greatest difficulty is the length of the winter, owing to which so much hay is required for the subsistence of the animals. The cattle during summer roam at large at the back of the cultivated land, where they find plenty of excellent pasturage. Sheep thrive well at Red River. Pigs do remarkably well, and, if turned out

where there are oak woods, require no looking after."

Evidently this is a country which perfectly admits of being colonised. Hitherto, owing to its isolated position, and the greater attractions of less distant settlements, it has made very little progress; but a time is certainly coming when its condition will be very different. It is often the destiny of the latest-settled countries to falsify the poor opinion of them entertained at the outset—of which the history of the British Isles, Holland, and Prussia furnishes a familiar example. And however little attractive to emigrants the territories of the Red River and the Saskatchewan may be at the present day, we need not hesitate to predict that they will be amply peopled in future times. As it is, we must beware of underrating these possessions. The Americans, who know them as well as we do, and who know their own western territories much better, prefer our unoccupied territories to their own. The Government Surveys of the United States show that the character of their territory west of the Mississippi and south of the great Missouri Road, beyond the 98th degree of longitude, is unfit for settlement. This is shown in a paper drawn up by Professor Henry, published in the 'Patent Office Report for 1856.' And Mr Louis Blodget, of Philadelphia, an eminent meteorologist, supports that opinion, and points out, in contradiction, the immense resources yet in store for Canada on both branches of the Saskatchewan, to the west of Red River. There, he says, "Of the plains and woodland borders the *valuable surface* measures fully five hundred thousand square miles"—or five times the extent of the whole United Kingdom. If these statements are correct, we may expect ere long to see a gradual influx of American settlers down the Red River into the British territories; while the fact that the only roads from Red River Settlement lead

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into the American territory, from whence, too, the settlement derives its supplies, is not calculated to make the settlers in that isolated but most important region very zealous of their nationality.

From the Red River Settlement to the frontier of British Columbia, on the west of the Rocky Mountains, is nearly nine hundred miles. Except in winter, the journey may be made by water all the way up to the foot of the Rocky Mountains. The Red River, upon which there are steamboats, runs into Lake Winnipeg, at its south-eastern end; and at the opposite end of the lake is the mouth of the Saskatchewan, a river nearly as large as the Missouri, and upon whose broad stream, which parts into a northerly and a southerly branch, canoes can reach the Rocky Mountains at several points. Steamboats will soon take the place of canoes on this great stream. The country between Lake Winnipeg and the Rocky Mountains is very level, and unintersected by any hill-ranges; so that both the navigation of the river, and the process of road-making, present a minimum of difficulties. Although the Saskatchewan will be of great use by-and-by for the transport of heavy goods, the fact that its stream is frozen during the winter months necessitates the construction of a good waggon-road for travelling parties, and also for the mail express. A line of telegraph may simultaneously be constructed at a trifling cost. These things can easily be done, and will be done. Whether, or at least when, a railway will be carried over this ground, we shall not attempt to say; but this much is established, that from the Red River Settlement to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, the country does not present a single engineering difficulty.

Arrived at the lofty chain of the Rocky Mountains, the eastern boundary of British Columbia, we find that there are a dozen passes by which the chain may be crossed on horse or foot. At the north-

eastern corner of British Columbia, indeed, the mountain-chain is so interrupted that the Peace River flows right through it; and by ascending its stream in a canoe, Sir George Mackenzie arrived within a few miles of the upper tributaries of the Fraser River. This route lies too much to the north to be adopted as the highway from Red River Settlement; but there are eight passes more to the south through which a highway might be carried, and some of which, as appears from Captain Palliser's report, are practicable for a railway. At the time Captain Palliser surveyed these passes, not one of them was considered by him to be practicable for waggons; but two months ago we saw it stated that a party with sixty waggons had arrived safely on the Columbia River from Red River. There is no question as to the practicability of carrying a railway from Canada right through to the Pacific: the difficulty is, where is the money to come from for the construction of so extensive an undertaking? No doubt, much might be done by the Government conceding to the company large allotments of land along the line, as is done by the American Government. But the Grand Trunk Railway has hitherto proved so bad an investment for the original shareholders, though of immense value to Canada, that it will need no ordinary concessions from the Government to induce a company to undertake the enterprise.

At present the most westerly point to which the railway system has been carried in Canada is the eastern shore of Lake Huron. From that point up to the head of Lake Superior, we think the water-communication might suffice, without a railway, for many years to come. But even if this were granted, the Americans have far the start of us. Their railway system extends from New York to St Joseph on the Missouri—in the longitude of Red River Settlement: so that they

have less to do to complete an interoceanic route than we have. On the other hand, the country between St Joseph and California is less fitted for settlement, and presents greater engineering difficulties, than the region between Red River and British Columbia. The Americans will have to cross two mountain-chains—the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada—with the desert of Utah between them; whereas we have only to cross one, and no desert. Moreover, gold has already been found in our territories on the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains, on the head-waters of the Athabasca and Saskatchewan; and if, as is not improbable, the diggings there prove rich, there may be a rush to them also, in which case the project of the interoceanic railway would at once assume a more hopeful character.

The Americans have already established a direct and tolerably good communication between St Joseph and San Francisco. At first they tried a "pony express," which travelled the distance in about nine days; but now they have established stage-coaches on the route, which passes through the Mormon territory, and also a line of telegraph, so that telegrams can be sent direct from San Francisco to New York. This is a great advantage which the American States on the Pacific have over our newly-established colonies. Moreover, a bill has been actually passed by the House of Representatives at Washington for the extension of their railway system to the Pacific.

"The bill incorporates a company, with seventy-five corporations, to construct a railroad from the 102d degree of west longitude to the western boundary of Nevada; and grants to the company every alternate section of land on the line of road, and also bonds of the United States to the amount of 16,000 dollars (upwards of £4000) a-mile. The Federal Government is to be represented in the company by five commissioners; public lands are

granted, and public credit loaned to the enterprise,—the latter taking the shape of 6 per cent bonds, of 1000 dollars each, running thirty years. The route chosen is known as the 'middle' route—namely, from Western Kansas to Western Nevada; and the Government engages to concede to the railroads now in course of construction through Kansas and California such aids as may be necessary to their completion. And, as a return for such subsidies and grants, the usual preference is to be given to the Government in the transmission of troops and material, and in the use of the telegraph, which the company is also required to construct collateral with its road. Two years are given for the location of the track." Let all our North American provinces join together, and, with the consent and countenance of the Home Government, offer terms equally good to any company which will construct a railway from Lake Superior to British Columbia. The interests at stake are enormous; and if terms like these are offered, and gold be discovered in quantity on the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains, the work may yet be accomplished.

The lamentable war in the United States, which is disorganising everything, will necessarily delay and seriously obstruct the project to which the House of Representatives has given its assent. It is still possible, therefore, that an interoceanic line of railway may first be constructed on British territory. But if the opposite is the case—if the line from St Joseph to San Francisco be opened first—then the kindred British project will be given up,—at least so far as regards the present generation. The consequences, though they may be inevitable, will be serious to us in many ways, and highly advantageous to the Americans,—as a slight consideration of the balance of interests and the tendency of affairs will show.

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ercises an important influence in shaping the configurations of states, and in regulating their relations with the states which adjoin them. This ought to be especially true in new countries like America, where historical associations are almost absent, and where considerations of present interest are not neutralised by sympathies and feelings inherited from the past,—and where, moreover, the population of the adjoining states are virtually of the same race. In the Old World, the geographical boundary of most of the states is determined by the great mountain-chain which, under various names—Pyrenees, Alps, Balkan, Caucasus, Hindoo-Koosh, and Himalayas, with their nameless continuation forming the northern frontier of Burma and Siam—runs latitudinally across the continents from the Atlantic to the Pacific. In the New World the case is exactly the reverse. There, the great mountain-chain runs longitudinally from north to south, separating, by a well-marked line and almost impassable boundary, the narrow region on the Pacific from the rest of the American continent. In regard to California, this separation is increased by a broad tract of desert, lying between the Sierra Nevada and the Rocky Mountains, and extending from the Mormon city of Utah southward to the banks of the river Gila, which is the present boundary between the Americans and Mexico. Upper California, the country now possessed by the Americans, is not separated by any natural boundary from Lower California, which forms a very long and narrow peninsula, separated from the rest of Mexico by the Gulf of California. Neither it nor the province of Sonora, which lies on the eastern shore of the Gulf, has any communication with the rest of Mexico except by sea—that is to say, by the roundabout route of the Isthmus of Panama: for the province of Sonora lies to the west of the Sierra Madre, the main

chain of the Cordillera; and, although there is a good pass (called La Cañada de Guadalupe) in the sierra, the country is so mountainous between that point and the capital, that no regular communication is kept up. The Americans, beyond doubt, will ere long annex these outlying provinces. In this case at least, politics will follow where geography points the way. Both Sonora and Lower California abound in the precious metals. In Sonora especially the gold and silver mines are remarkable for their number and for the richness of their ores. Large deposits of coal, also, are said to exist in the north-western part of California. The population of these provinces is so scanty as to be hardly worth taking into account. La Paz, the capital of Lower California, hardly contains three hundred inhabitants.

If we add Lower California and Sonora to Upper California, Oregon, and the Washington Territory, we shall have a region extending along the shores of the Pacific for two thousand miles, from the Straits of San Juan de Fuca to Cape St Lucas (the southern point of Lower California). This state, backed by a vast supply of the precious metals, would become the leading power in the northern Pacific; San Francisco would become the emporium of the China trade, which would go thence by the overland route to New York and Europe; and the numerous and surpassingly beautiful and fertile islands of the Archipelago would have their destinies shaped by this great White State of Western America. In such circumstances, would there not be the strongest inducement for British Columbia to unite herself with this great state? Possessing excellent resources, which she has not the capital to work—unconnected with the other British provinces, either by railway or by a community of administrative interest—dependent, moreover, for almost everything on the overland railway from San Francisco—would British Co-

lumbia not willingly exchange her position as a feeble and isolated dependency of a far-distant Crown, for the sake of becoming an integral part of the great empire state of the Pacific?

We may expect to witness changes more immediate, and certainly not less influential in affecting the fortunes of our British provinces, in the vast territories lying to the east of the Rocky Mountains. A dismemberment of the American Union is regarded as certain by every impartial observer in this country. Even among the Northern States there are many who now look forward to that issue as inevitable. The mercantile classes of New York, whose interests made them especially desirous to restore the Union in its integrity, and whose wishes made them cling to the belief that such a restoration was practicable, are now abandoning the hope. The South, they see, will not only succeed in establishing its independence, but will not on any terms enter into a new Union of which the New England States shall be members. These States, and the States of the South, are opposed to each other alike in feelings and in interests. Neither will ever have anything to do with the other. If the Union could be re-established, we believe a majority of the Northern States would *now* repudiate the policy of Abolition, and enact a Fugitive Slave Law more stringent than before. But that could not now suffice. The question, therefore, is, will the States of the North-west continue to make common cause with the Atlantic States, or will they not? If they do hold together at the close of the contest, it can only be on the condition that the Atlantic States abandon the Morrill Tariff, their stringent system of protection for the benefit of their manufactures. At the present moment there is a strong desire in America to reduce the dismemberment of the Union to a minimum; and it is possible that the Union may be

reconstituted, *minus* the New England States. If this were done, the South, the North-west, and the Pacific States, would still hold together; although, with the example of disruption once set, we think such an arrangement would not last long. The States of the North-west, of the South, and of the Pacific, have no solid bonds of union. There is this much, indeed, in their favour, that they are divided by no bitter enmity and antagonism of spirit, such as separates the South and the New England States; and, moreover, they would be in perfect accord as regards commercial policy, each being influenced by its circumstances in favour of free trade. Nevertheless, it is more probable, once the disruption is fairly accomplished, that these different sections of the old Union will establish themselves as separate, though not rival, states.

Provinces which are opposed in interests to one another may long remain in grumbling union if there be no means of either improving its position by a change. But unhappily for the Northern States, the provinces which form their eastern and western extremities are precisely those which might most easily and naturally make a change in their allegiance. At the eastern end we find the State of Maine, jutting so far into British America that it is almost enclosed by it, and lying on the highway by which British trade and influence pass to and fro. Portland is at present the sole port of the Canadas in winter time, and at all times it will continue to be the most direct route to the ocean. Such a position might tell in our favour, in the event of great changes in eastern America. At the western end, again, we find the States of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, bordering on the great lakes, from which there is a line of magnificent water-carriage for the bulky produce of those corn-growing countries down the St Lawrence to the sea; while a more expeditious mode of transit will

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also be open to them by the Grand Trunk Railway. In truth, for these three large States of the North-west, we think the best line of communication with the sea is not the Mississippi, but the line of the lakes and St Lawrence. Michigan is so enveloped by those inland seas, that it may almost be called a maritime State. The best customers of the North-western States are, the Southern States, which are reached by the Mississippi and its tributaries,—and Europe, which can be reached most cheaply and directly by the line of the St Lawrence.

Large rivers, however convenient as geographical boundary-lines, are not barriers of severance between peoples, but points of contact, bonds of union—common ground, upon which common interests make both parties meet as friends and associates. This is especially true of the line of the lakes and the St Lawrence. Lying as that great water-system does within a noble basin of territory, of which it is at once the centre and the highway, it is more fitted to become the heart of a confederacy composed of the States which fringe its shores, than to continue to be a line of demarcation between opposite sentiments and allegiance. Nor must we overlook another point where British interests are concerned. We have previously pointed out the peculiar isolated position and condition of the Red River Settlement; which has not a single road to connect it with Canada, and which consequently derives its supplies from, and carries on its trade with, the North-western States. Two years ago, we know, this state of matters had served to produce considerable discontent in the settlement; and every year (as long as matters remain as they are) must increase the influence of American interests and feelings. Red River Settlement is as yet but a small place; but it is growing, and will continue to grow; and its geographical position renders the retention of its allegiance a matter of the utmost importance to the whole of British

America. It is the connecting-link between the Canadas and British Columbia; it is the embryo of a state which will, ere long, spread over the wide and fertile plains watered by the Assinaboine and Saskatchewan; and if it were attracted towards the North-western American States, British America would thereby be cut right in two. Instead of a noble empire, extending from the mouth of the St Lawrence to the shores of the Pacific, we should be stopped short at the western end of Lake Superior; and British Columbia would languish as an isolated province, which neither could nor would remain long in our possession,—but which would be welcomed with acclamation as a new member of the American Confederacy of the Pacific.

We beg it to be observed that we are not making predictions, but pointing out tendencies. No one can tell as yet the exact form and condition in which the States of the American Republic will emerge from their present convulsion. Whether the Union will be restored, for a time, on its old basis, *minus* the New England States; or whether it will split up at once into four great sections; or whether some intermediate course will be at first adopted—we do not presume to forecast. And until that be determined, it is impossible to calculate the nature of the influence which this disruption will have upon the adjoining British provinces. But this disruption, in its ultimate consequences, will affect the fortunes of every State and Government in North America. The disrupted parts will seek to strengthen themselves by entering into new combinations. And the result will probably be, either that some of the American States will be attracted towards union with our provinces, or that some of our provinces will be attracted towards union with them. The rival States on the opposite shores of the Lakes and the St Lawrence will soon find themselves engaged in a game like

that well known to schoolboys, of pulling each other, in friendly or unfriendly fashion, across the score. And whichever prove the stronger and the more firmly united will gain at the expense of the other. Recent events, by weakening the American States, and discrediting the American principles of government, have turned the tables very much in our favour. But it must not be too readily inferred that the danger of disruption is removed from British America, amidst the changes impending to the south of the St Lawrence. It is only by timeous speculation—by reasonable inferences from events—that we can prepare for occurrences which for good or ill must exercise a mighty influence upon the fortunes and destiny of our nascent empire in Northern America. And the best and most assured of all remedies for possible dangers, as well as the most promising means to reap the possible benefits which may accrue to our American provinces in consequence of the disruption of the Union, is, to draw together all our provinces in the bonds of confederation. If our scattered provinces and settlements were linked together in a Federation—united as well as possible by roads and railways—they would not only keep together, but would probably draw towards them in friendly union some of the wavering States of the disrupted and crumbling Union. Now is the time when such a project could be most favourably advanced. Not only the danger from without, but the project of the “intercolonial railway” from Canada to Halifax, and the obvious importance of extending telegraphic communication overland to British Columbia, have recently drawn all our provinces into harmonious feeling and united action. Nor has their loyalty to the British Crown ever before been so steady and pervading. We say nothing at present of the likelihood of their being willing to have a Prince of our Royal Family at the head of their

State. That must be left to the provinces themselves. But at least let our Government, by those means which every Government can employ, make it understood by the provinces that a project of Confederation which promises so many advantages will receive every encouragement from the Crown. Such an arrangement, if our provinces are to remain independent of the Americans, will ere long become a necessity. Such a confederation, too, is indispensable to the prosecution of the great works now required for opening up the central portion of British America, and establishing communication with our provinces in the Pacific. And would it not gratify the feelings, as well as promote the material advantage of the colonists? Would it not open to them a career, which no mere province can ever offer—honours and offices to which British Americans may legitimately aspire, but which are at present beyond their reach? A wide field and full scope best content the ambitious, who delight in public life, and satisfy the multitude, who, while unaspiringly looking on, feel that they too might go in for prizes if they liked. We cannot open to them the British Senate,—but let us aid them in establishing a united Government of their own, which shall link together all the provinces in a grand and growing empire, which shall extend across America from sea to sea, affording a high career to every one who desires it, and rendering stable and self-reliant against every attack the future of British power in North America.

The fortunes of the British American provinces are mainly in their own keeping. Downing Street may suggest, but it is for the colonies to act. The nation at home gives them hearty sympathy; and if they play their part well, the Government will not leave them in the lurch. If they have little capital for the promotion of public works, they have immense tracts of land to employ instead. All of us last

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summer were disappointed with the Canadians. Instead of being jealous of their independence, and prudent in preparing for defence, they refused to adopt the Militia Bill, and as yet have done nothing to repair the error. We understand, indeed—the Governor-General said as much lately—that a measure providing for the defence of the colonies was in preparation, which would amply satisfy the Imperial Government. We hope such is the case: we expect no less of the Canadians. They are a noble and gallant people: the British blood flows more purely in their veins, their physical constitution has been better preserved by their moist and temperate climate, than in the case of any other section of our widely extended race. We believe they possess all the qualities fitted to make them a great and noble nation. Let them use their opportunities wisely and well, and ere long their territories will grow into a vast empire, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and having its heart on those great inland seas which in their aggregate mass constitute the Mediterranean of the New World.

Of course the issue, as we have pointed out, may be different. The downfall of the American Union may, by its indirect efforts, produce disruption also of British America. That depends upon whether such result is regarded with indifference, or is withstood by timeous measures. We are not of those who regard with indifference—still less, as some seem to do, with jealous dislike—our colonial empire. Even as a question of material advantage, we are in favour of a generous policy towards the colonies. The proposal to cast them adrift has nothing to recommend it save the simplicity of the process: a simplicity, however, hardly more commendable than that of a man who should cut off his leg from impatience of his corns. The conception is that of a Doctor, not of a Statesman. Let

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us ask, moreover, does it not seem strange, at the present day, that the whole talk should be of Separation? Can the statesmanship of England rise to no higher conception than that of political destruction? Have we become enamoured of that most un-English policy—of that special characteristic of the revolutionary force, which destroys but cannot reconstruct? When political arrangements made for one condition of affairs become out of place owing to an alteration of circumstances, can British statesmen imagine no better policy than summarily to overthrow the old regime, and leave it thenceforth in ruins—or utterly sweep it away, without a thought of replacing it by an appropriate substitute? Are we, as England's offspring come of age, ostentatiously to repudiate our parental relationship, and to cast them out of the fabric of British dominion, without holding out to them the least prospect of continued relationship, or suggesting any means by which it may be kept up? Is England, indeed, so very strong that she can afford to throw away the fellowship of her colonies? Have we also so little of the natural feelings of a common nationality as not to care whether our brethren are with us or not?

It does, indeed, seem extraordinary, that a policy, based upon such sentiments and ideas, should be seriously entertained amongst us at the present time. If England has no heart to vibrate to the sentiment of Nationality, so vigorous on the Continent, let us at least not be blind to our own interests and to the course of events around us. What is the grand and dominating feature of European politics at the present hour? What is the great principle which shapes the actions of nations, and affects the policy of governments? Is it not the principle of Nationality—the yearning and deliberate desires of politically severed portions of the same race to reunite themselves in a common brotherhood—not merely for the indulgence of a sentiment, but as

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the most efficient means of developing their progress and augmenting their power? Do not the Scandinavian peoples, on either shore of the Sound, stretch out their hands to one another, and long to be united in closer ties? Does not the entire Polish race—does not each fragment of that long-dissevered and down-held people—mourn and clamour and strive to regain the national unity? Do not the Germans, in their own staid slow-moving way, show themselves animated by the same spirit? While some English statesmen think only of terminating the already shadowy bond which links together the various sections of the British race, does not all Germany—we speak not of the Courts but of the people—desire with heart and soul that the lax bonds which unite the separate States of the Fatherland, should be replaced by a system which would confer on them the real boon of national unity? We need not point to Italy, where the passion for unification may be read in characters of blood; nor to Greece and the Ionian Islands, where the same passion has long been brooding, and now begins to act. But it is interesting, as a sign of the times, to remark, that in the face of those projects of substantial unification, the principle of consanguinity, even in its weakest shape, is deemed worthy of being appealed to by the sagacious ruler of France as a means of drawing together the three so-called Latin races of south-western Europe—an appeal which may not be very heartily responded to, but which, when thus advanced on the very slenderest of grounds, indisputably reveals the importance now attached to the principle upon which it is based.

Is the British race to be the only exception to this? When all the races of Europe—Poles and Scandinavians, Germans and Italians, Greek and Latin alike—are tending towards increased unity, are the British to desire only disunion and separation? When the States

of the Continent are rising into the greater magnitude and power of Race-empires, dwarfing our little isle into territorial insignificance, is England to adopt the opposite course, and cast away her natural pillars and supports? She has spread over the earth like a gigantic banyan-tree, dropping shoots in every quarter of the globe, which rival in vitality the parent stem. If the mutual connection continues, every generation will witness a fresh development of the British power. In these outlying unpeopled regions of the globe the British race increases with a rapidity beyond the reach of the Continental nations; and every year is bringing closer the scattered sections of our numerous and powerful race, annihilating distances by the ever-increasing triumphs of the railway, telegraph, and steam-navigation. New Zealand, Australia, the Cape—in fact all our colonies, by the force of blood and the necessity of position, will ere long become important maritime Powers. And when all other peoples are uniting in closer bonds, why should not we look forward to the time when a similar result may be accomplished by our own race, and when the maritime power of England, soon destined to be eclipsed if England stand alone, may acquire a new and augmented supremacy by the formation of a Confederacy of the free Anglo-Saxon Powers of the sea? Instead of thinking only of casting off our numerous colonies, why should we not seek to group them in confederacies, which would help them to stand alone, and in due time combine them all on equal terms with the mother country in the bonds of a mutual alliance? Time and experiment alone can show how far such a conception is practicable: many a good scheme breaks down in the course of realisation. But if we attempt nothing, we accomplish nothing. And surely this is a nobler project to strive for, a wiser end to keep in view, than to

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were a mere useless encumbrance.

It is reasonable that colonies,
like children, when they come of
age, should maintain themselves ;
but in loosening the bonds of
parental control, the manner of
doing so is everything. The pa-
rent, or parent State, should so act
that the old bond of law, or com-
pulsion, may be replaced by one of
voluntary association, in the bonds
of mutual interest and natural af-
fection. But when we see the
British Parliament, either through
its committees, or by the uncom-
bated voice of individual members,
regarding the question in its narrow-
est and most superficial aspect, and

proposing the loosening of one tie
after another which binds our colo-
nies to the mother country, without
a thought of the future—without
a single suggestion, or even expres-
sion of desire, for a continuance of
political connection with the other
sections of our race,—chilling the
instincts of nationality by leading
our colonies to infer that we regard
them merely as burdens, and care
nothing for our common brother-
hood,—then we say that such a
course is both a blunder and a dis-
grace; and that our public men,
instead of quietly and discreetly
preparing the way and suggesting
the means for ulterior combina-
tions, are doing their best to spoil
the grandest future which ever
opened before any race or country.